FEATURES

Winchester to interview 3 finalists for town manager post

WILL DOWD | STAFF WRITER

December 4, 2025 . 5:58 PM — 4 min read

Winchester Town Hall, where the Select Board will conduct public interviews with three town manager finalists during the week of Dec. 15. The contenders bring experience running Hamilton, Woodstock in Vermont and Cohasset, each with operating budgets in the tens of millions and responsibilities spanning capital planning, labor negotiations and infrastructure projects. COURTESY PHOTO

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The Select Board will interview three finalists for town manager during the week of Dec. 15, marking a pivotal step in a search that began after Beth Rudolph's unexpected resignation in July and comes as Winchester confronts significant fiscal pressures and major infrastructure needs.

The candidates are Joseph Domelowicz Jr., town manager in Hamilton; Eric Duffy, municipal manager in Woodstock, Vermont; and Christopher Senior, former town manager in Cohasset. Select Board member Anthea Brady, who serves on the search committee, said the board expects to make a final decision in later December, with the new manager's start date dependent on the candidate's availability.

Three candidates emerge from screening process

Domelowicz has served as town manager in Hamilton since 2017. Before Hamilton, Domelowicz worked as town administrator in Ipswich from 2013 to 2017 and held assistant town administrator positions in Danvers and Ipswich. He holds a master's degree in public administration from Suffolk University and a bachelor's degree from the University of Massachusetts Amherst. During his tenure in Hamilton, Domelowicz has overseen budget development, capital planning, labor negotiations and infrastructure projects for the North Shore community of approximately 8,000 residents. Hamilton's fiscal 2025 operating budget totals approximately $35 million.

Duffy serves as municipal manager in Woodstock, Vermont, a position he has held since 2019. Before Woodstock, Duffy worked in Stoneham for several years in municipal administration. His experience includes overseeing town operations, budget preparation, capital project management and community engagement in Vermont's municipal governance structure, which differs in some respects from Massachusetts town manager systems. Woodstock's population is approximately [illegible] residents.

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Senior most recently served as town manager in Cohasset, where he oversaw municipal operations for the South Shore community of approximately 8,000 residents. Before Cohasset, Senior held municipal management positions in other Massachusetts communities. His experience includes budget development, capital planning, labor relations and infrastructure project oversight in Massachusetts' town manager system. Cohasset's fiscal 2025 operating budget totals approximately $45 million.

Challenges facing Winchester

The next town manager will also navigate the State of the Town Committee's ongoing fiscal planning work, oversee aging infrastructure through a comprehensive capital planning process and manage rising healthcare costs and union contract settlements while balancing service expectations with financial sustainability.

Winchester faces financial pressures, with Finance Committee Chair Derek Ross warning of projected operating deficits of roughly $3 million to $5 million in the coming years as expenses outpace revenue growth under Proposition 2½.

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Meanwhile, the 25-member State of the Town Committee is now working toward a comprehensive fiscal plan that will likely include an operating override on the March 2026 ballot to help stabilize the fiscal 2027 budget and fund priority needs. About 95% of Winchester's $165.7 million budget — roughly $157 million — comes from residential property taxes. The commercial tax base generates only about $8 million to $9 million a year, leaving homeowners to shoulder most of the load. This creates li

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room to maneuver within the 2.5% levy limit and there is modest new-growth projections of $800,000 for fiscal 2026.

On the capital side, Town Meeting recently approved $4.4 million in appropriations, including $2.15 million to replace Lincoln Elementary School's failed chiller and rooftop HVAC unit, even as Town Hall alone faces an estimated $8.5 million in HVAC work and the five-year capital plan now exceeds $100 million, including about $20 million in downtown improvements that will require outside funding. Collective bargaining agreements with police and fire unions remain under negotiation.

How Winchester got here

Rudolph joined Winchester in 2004 as assistant town engineer under Bob Conway, became town engineer in 2010 and served as acting town manager beginning in 2021 after former town manager Lisa Wong departed for South Hadley. The Select Board named Rudolph permanent town manager in December 2022.

During her tenure, Rudolph oversaw substantial completion of Winchester's multi-decade flood mitigation and stormwater work, numerous transportation projects including traffic calming and the Tri-Community Greenway and the delivery of multiple new school buildings. In March 2025, she received strong marks in her first formal performance review as permanent town manager, with board members praising her budgeting discipline, collaborative leadership style and organizational skills.

Rudolph submitted her resignation July 7, with her last day Sept. 3. Select Board member Bill McGonigle said her brief letter offered no explanation beyond her intention to leave.

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The Select Board appointed Stephen Delaney as interim town manager, with his first day expected Sept. 10. Delaney brings more than 40 years of municipal management experience, having served as town administrator in Georgetown from 2003 to 2009 and Wenham from 1995 to 2002, with interim town manager roles in Coventry, Rhode Island and Winchendon. The board stated that Delaney would provide stability while the permanent search proceeded and would not be a candidate for the full-time role.

The Select Board engaged the Collins Center for Public Management to support the search. A screening committee comprised of Select Board members Anthea Brady and Mike Bettencourt, former Select Board chairs Lance Grenzeback and Jennifer Wilson and Town Comptroller Stacy Ward reviewed applications and conducted initial interviews in executive session. Brady said six people were interviewed, with three advancing as finalists.

Public interviews and decision ahead

The Select Board will conduct finalist interviews in public session during the week of Dec. 15, allowing residents to observe and offer input. Brady said plans for community engagement beyond the interviews are in progress, with the board working to determine what additional public forums or opportunities for residents to meet finalists might be arranged.

The Collins Center job posting emphasizes the need for strong financial acumen, strategic budgeting experience, capital project management skills, labor relations expertise and the ability to engage with Winchester's highly informed and active citizenry.

The new manager will assume responsibilities that include overseeing day-to-day operations of all town departments under the Select Board's jurisdiction, preparing and submitting the annual budget and capital

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improvement program, appointing and supervising department heads, executing policies and decisions made by the Select Board, acting as the town's representative in contract negotiations including labor agreements and representing the town in dealings with other governmental agencies.

The position's starting salary range is anticipated to be $225,000 or more, depending on qualifications. The successful candidate will also have the opportunity to select the next assistant town manager.

Will Dowd is a Massachusetts journalist who covers municipal government and community life for Winchester News. He previously co-founded the Marblehead Current and now runs The Marblehead Independent, a reader-funded digital newsroom.

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By Talia Ho | Correspondent Fame. Fortune. And all that jazz. This spring, Winchester High School presents “Chicago: Teen Edition,” a bold musical that explores celebrity culture, media manipulation, and the cost of ambition. Set in the 1920s, this iconic production is sure to leave the audience wanting more. Performances will

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March 4, 2026

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The following was submitted by the Network for Social Justice: The Winchester community came together last week at the Griffin Museum of Photography for the inaugural Black History and Culture Celebration, an evening filled with music, student creativity, and powerful messages about equity, unity, and the enduring legacy of Black

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Winchester residents share more snow photos

Well, Winchester, we made it through the weekend with only a coating of snow that amounted to nothing on Sunday afternoon. But during the Feb. 22-23 blizzard, Winchester News once again asked residents to send their snow photos. And here is what we received! Solmaz Amirnazmi said her daughters and

NELL ESCOBAR COAKLEY | STAFF WRITER

March 2, 2026

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Winchester Community Music School set to expand, upgrade

The big events in Winchester Community Music School always take place in Nichols Performance Hall. With the school and its performances’ growing in popularity, the hall and many of its amenities are due for an upgrade. The performance hall is one of the main areas that the school seeks to

TAVISHI CHATTOPADHYAY | CORRESPONDENT

February 26, 2026

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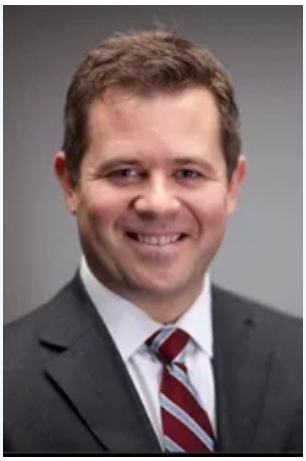
EVENTS

Ripley Chapel in Winchester presents ‘Syldason: You Are Welcome Here’

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

March 4, 2026



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Rep. Michael Day helps House colleagues pass sweeping energy affordability bill

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Winchester gun owners face new training rules startin

Public safety data How Win es on firearms licenses in comparable

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The following was submitted by the Office of Rep. Michael S. Day: Rep. Michael S. Day and his colleagues in the House of Representatives recently passed energy affordability legislation that would result in over $9 billion in savings for utility ratepayers over the next 10 years. The bill maintains critical

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Massachusetts communities Active licenses as of Jan. 25, 2025 — Source: Massachusetts Criminal History Systems Board License to carry firearms Firearms identification card Winchester and Marblehead are the focus communities. Peers selected based on comparable population size, demographics and suburban

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March 4, 2026

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